



ACQUISITION,
TECHNOLOGY AND
LOGISTICS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
(ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY & OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH)
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
(ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY)
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
(ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH)
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY
DIRECTOR, MILITARY POSTAL SERVICE AGENCY
DESIGNATED AGENCY SAFETY AND HEALTH
OFFICIALS

SUBJECT: DoD Occupational Health Guidance for Handling Suspicious Letters and Packages

Many facilities in communities around the world have received suspicious letters and packages that potentially contained anthrax or other biological threat agents. Most were empty envelopes/packages; some have contained powdery substances. I want to ensure that the health of our DoD employees is protected during this time. Therefore, the purpose of this memorandum is to recommend standardized procedures for handling such incidents within the DoD.

First, I recommend that DoD Postal Service employees wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as recommended by the US Centers for Disease Control (Attachment 1). I recommend that workplace supervisors continue to conduct risk assessment and risk management of items potentially contaminated with anthrax and other biological agents as outlined in your coordinated emergency response plans. The risk to postal workers within the DoD is from cutaneous anthrax and therefore, nitrile gloves should be made available to every DoD postal employee and any DoD employee worried about their health. At this time, I do not recommend extensive distribution of respirators throughout the DoD in response to these threats. However, I do recommend respirators for DoD Postal Service employees who work with electronic mail sorting equipment. Respirators require medical monitoring and fit testing in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Second, it is clear that education of our personnel to potential hazards and timely response to potential threats are necessary to prevent illness to DoD personnel and to support DoD operations. Our first line of defense against these threats is immediate identification of

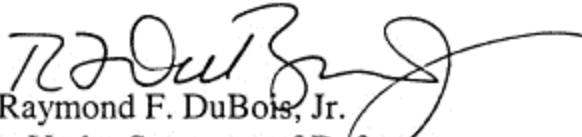


suspicious letters and packages. Therefore, all DoD personnel should have access to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Advisory on suspicious letters and packages. I am requesting that the FBI Advisory be posted in each workplace (Attachment 2). It is available on-line at <http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/pressrel01/mail3.pdf>.

Third, I am recommending that the DoD follow the US Postal Service and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on how to handle items contaminated with anthrax. I have posted these guidance on the DENIX public website at <http://www.denix.osd.mil>, click on Public Menu. As new information becomes available, the guidance is subject to change. Please check the DENIX website weekly to be sure you have the most recent information. Additionally, handwashing prevents the spread of disease. Therefore, all DoD personnel must follow proper handwashing techniques during this time of increased threat of biological agent exposure (Attachment 3).

Finally, I am convening a task force composed of experts across the services and other federal agencies to determine follow on actions necessary to protect our workers. The task force will meet initially to discuss monitoring of people and mailrooms to quickly identify contaminated areas, and to discuss treatment of people and the mail to prevent the spread of anthrax. The DoD is committed to protecting the health of our employees. Please work with your local occupational health, emergency responders and security personnel to ensure that all is being done in the war against terrorism.

If you or your staff have any questions, contact Maj Lisa May at (703) 604-1625, email lisa.may@osd.mil.


Raymond F. DuBois, Jr.
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
(Installations & Environment)

Attachments:

As stated